

public expense, is it? Would six months enable him to learn his business, would they enable him to become a mechanic and give him all those qualities for the asserted want of which Mr. BRYDGES accuses him. Sir, there is one explanation of this change, and only one—that he, too, is not insensible to the influence of the masters under whom he serves—that although political influence was a vice when practiced by the late Government, it is a virtue when practiced by the present. Mr. BRYDGES, according to his own statement, made some wonderful discoveries, and saved the country a wonderful amount of money—\$25,000 on one transaction. He could not have given a better illustration of his value to the Government; and I confidently believe he owes the office he now holds on the Great Western Railway to the statement in his report to the Government that on the single item of coal he saved \$25,000. The House will be amused when I tell them, as Mr. CARVELL clearly proves, that there was no saving in reality, and that it was only the difference of the price of coal one day and another. The way in which Mr. BRYDGES proceeds to prove his assertion is this: He tells us that the late Superintendent paid so much for coal, and he got them for so much less. When he called the saving \$25,000 he fell into a grievous error, for I believe that it was only something like \$3,000. But Mr. CARVELL shows that in reality he lost \$5,000 by closing the transaction at the time he did, instead of saving anything, for within a few days there was still a further reduction in the price of coal. Everybody can understand what a difference a few cents per ton would make in the cost of fuel to a road of the extent of the Intercolonial Railway. But, Sir, this gentleman, when he went down, informed the world through his report that the Spring Hill coal was worth nothing; it was at least twenty per cent. worse than Pictou coal; but the next day, when he found that your humble servant was not a stockholder, and that hon. gentlemen opposite were largely interested, he purchased 10,000 tons of it.

Hon. Mr. SMITH—I understood the honorable member to say that gentlemen on this side of the House—gentlemen in the Government presumably—had become interested in coal stock. I desire to know if I understood

him correctly, and what it is that he insinuates.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER—I say I believe that Mr. BRYDGES, when he made his report against the Spring Hill coal, was under the impression that I was a stockholder in it, but when he went down to St. John and found that the Hon. Mr. BURPEE was a stockholder, and that I was not, he thought it necessary and proper to change his tactics. I do not complain that the Minister of Customs should have stock in that concern, nor do I speak of it to find fault, or to insinuate that there has been anything in his conduct in that regard which was at all open to exception. I simply state what the facts are.

Hon. Mr. BURPEE—I desire to explain, for the information of the hon. gentleman, and for the information of the House, that I had nothing whatever to do with the formation or organization of the Spring Hill company, and the only shares I ever had in it, which came to me at second hand, have been in the hands of the broker for over a year, and are nearly all disposed of.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER—I hope my hon. friend the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is satisfied.

Hon. Mr. SMITH—I desired that the hon. gentleman should be specific in his statement. He said there were gentlemen on this side of the House—meaning gentlemen in the Government—who had shares in the Spring Hill mine.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER—I correct myself, and say, instead of *gentlemen*, that there is a *gentleman*.

Hon. Mr. BURPEE—Perhaps the House will permit me to add that I never heard that tenders were being called for, nor did I know that coals had been purchased from any source whatever, until three weeks after the transaction closed.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER—I have expressly stated that I did not refer to this matter in order to find fault with the hon. gentleman, and I take this opportunity to state that I do not believe he had the slightest corrupt relations with any person in that connection. I consider it entirely consistent with the position he holds that he should be a shareholder in the Spring Hill Mining Company, and, indeed, I consider it an exceedingly proper thing that he, a member of the Government of this country, should encourage the development